

Eureka!

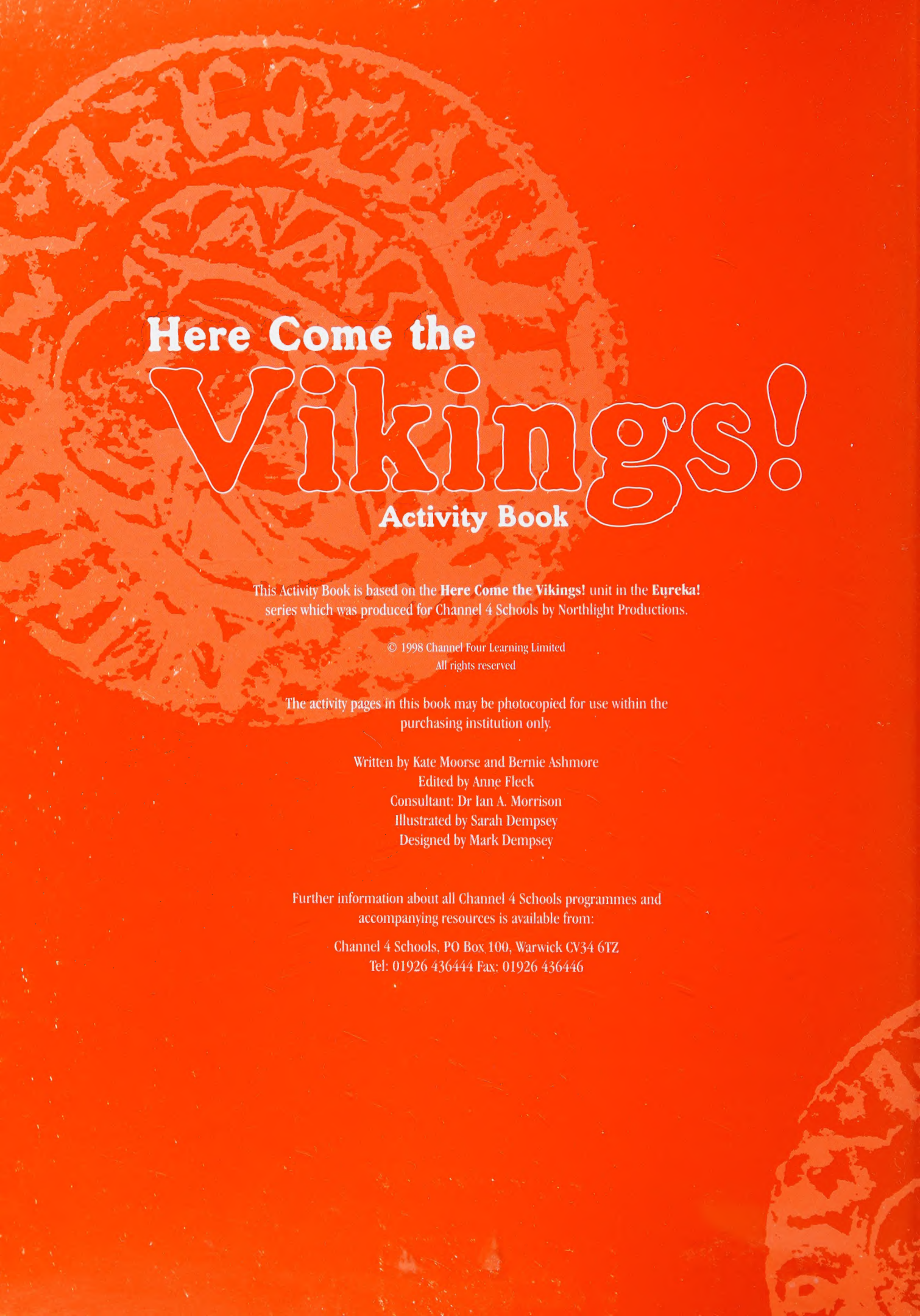
Here Come the

Vikings!

Activity Book

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Here Come the Vikings!

Activity Book

This Activity Book is based on the **Here Come the Vikings!** unit in the **Eureka!** series which was produced for Channel 4 Schools by Northlight Productions.

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Written by Kate Moorse and Bernie Ashmore
Edited by Anne Fleck
Consultant: Dr Ian A. Morrison
Illustrated by Sarah Dempsey
Designed by Mark Dempsey

Further information about all Channel 4 Schools programmes and accompanying resources is available from:

Channel 4 Schools, PO Box 100, Warwick CV34 6TZ
Tel: 01926 436444 Fax: 01926 436446

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Introduction

The activity pages in this book are designed to be used with 9–11 year olds. In particular they are intended to support **Here Come the Vikings!**, a unit of programmes in the Channel 4 Schools topics series, **Eureka!**

This book is divided into five sections based on key questions about the Viking period. It is designed to be used alone or to support and extend the television programmes. The activities are intended to help pupils explore key historical concepts and develop skills in other curriculum areas, particularly in English and literacy and in geography and mapping.

A teachers' page introduces the activities in each new section and includes suggestions for extending the tasks. Pupil activity sheets are designed to be photocopied and worked on directly.

The theme

The television programmes focus on evidence of Viking settlements and Viking life, using re-enactments to bring the period alive. One aim of the activity book is to explore to what extent stereotypes of the Vikings are accurate. Children may have very strong images in their minds of the Vikings, from television programmes, cartoons and books. It is therefore useful to discover at the outset what pre-conceptions children already hold.

The 'key questions' approach

The book takes a key question as the theme for each section, and then explores a number of smaller questions to help answer it. The key questions provide the structure for the book whilst the smaller ones provide activities for teachers and pupils to explore together. Throughout this stage pupils should be asking more questions of their own and developing more complex questions. Questioning skills in history should be developed from 'What was it like?' to 'How do we know it was like that?', 'What are we pretty certain of?' and 'How did one set of events lead to another?'



Section 1

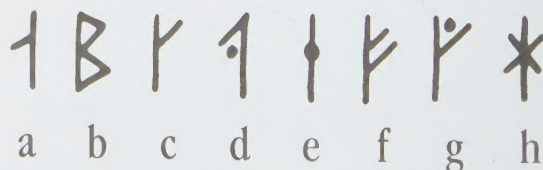
How do we know about the Vikings?

Finding out about people who lived a long time ago is like solving a mystery. Some of the evidence has been found; some is yet to be discovered. Some has been found but it is not clear what it means. Making sense of all this evidence is the task of the historian. Many different kinds of clues have been left about the Vikings. There are the written records of people who encountered them: those who were attacked by them; those who traded with them; those who employed them for protection. These different groups saw the Vikings in different ways. Their enemies wrote about how violent they were; a Muslim writer, Ibn Fadlan, on one occasion wrote of how unclean they were. Some documents were written by people who actually met the Vikings; others were written much later by people who had only heard stories. Often these stories were exaggerated over the years. Also, the Vikings told stories about themselves which were written down much later by their descendants. Some sagas therefore reflected the politics of later periods and others were historical romances.

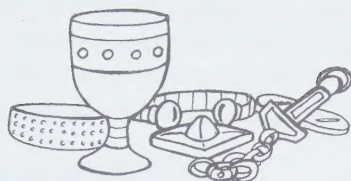
Some original Viking works remain intact, such as their great defensive ramparts. Treasure hoards have also been discovered, full of gold and silver coins from the Middle East, Mediterranean, Eastern Europe and Britain. Graves and ship burials have been discovered containing personal possessions which were buried with the Vikings. Together, these sources give us considerable information to try to piece together what the Vikings were really like.



Rune stone found in Norway



from *The Vikings*
(British Museum Press)



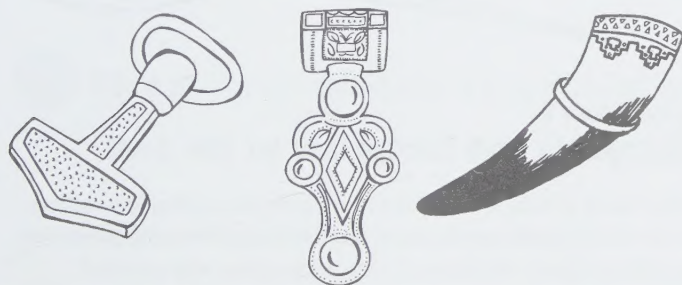
Section 2

Why did the Vikings settle in certain places?

The stories we most often hear about the Vikings are of a ferocious and violent people who attacked British monasteries – for example the attack on Lindisfarne in AD 793, in which they stole gold and silver – sacked villages and farms; and killed and stole from ordinary people. However, this is only one aspect of Viking life. What about the farmers who took to sea in open boats, carrying seeds and animals in the hope of finding richer farm lands to settle? What about the stories of kings who paid the Vikings thousands of pounds' weight in silver to go home and leave them, or those who paid them to stay and protect them from other Viking bands?

What about the sad tales of the Vikings who settled in Greenland, whose colony must have grown smaller and weaker over hundreds of years until finally it faded altogether – later visitors finding one last unburied body?

What of the Viking traders, sailing to unknown lands to barter furs, soapstone pots and slaves for wine and spices? Do we hear of the families left at home when the men went off raiding? Do we hear how the women ran the villages and looked after the farms, homes and slaves? Together these stories help us build a picture of the whole of Viking life.



Section 3

What was Viking society like?

The Vikings are best remembered for their aggressive character. However, there was much more to their culture. Their boat-building and navigational technology were so developed that they could cross oceans. Their craftwork, in metal and wood, was beautiful. Their ability to balance aggression with trading and political skills enabled them to spread and control large areas of Europe. Their development of democratic processes enabled them to maintain internal order and solve social problems in ways far in advance of other northern Europeans. The roles of men and women were clearly defined in ways which gave women limited power within their own domain. The structure of their society into three tiers – jarls, freemen and thralls – gave it a stability which lasted for hundreds of years.

Section 4

How and where did the Vikings travel?

The Vikings originated in the lands now known as Norway, Sweden and Denmark. In some of these areas, particularly in Norway, travel was very restricted by high mountains and a coast cut by deep fjords. Water was the obvious means of transport. The Vikings became skilled boat builders, building fishing boats, cargo vessels and warships. They built ships to hug the coastline, travel up rivers and cross the seas and oceans. Some, such as the longship, had oars for rowing as well as a sail. Others, such as some of the trading vessels, relied almost entirely on a sail.

At first the Vikings would have just travelled along their own coastline, trading and fishing; then, perhaps having being blown off course, they began to travel further and further afield. They found lands with rich farms; lands with monasteries full of silver; uninhabited lands such as Iceland; large empires with trading links to Asia and Africa; and lands with unknown materials, foods and jewels. Evidence of the Vikings' travel suggests that they reached Britain, France, Ireland, Iceland, Greenland, North America, the furthest parts of the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, the Caspian Sea and Russia.

Section 5

What legacy have the Vikings left us?

Perhaps the most dominant legacy the Vikings have left us is the stereotypical image of the Viking as a violent and fierce raider with helmet and horns. This legacy and many others have been received through a number of reinterpretations throughout history. For example, the Nazis romanticised the Vikings as great Aryan heroes. We do however have many other legacies from the Vikings: people's names, such as Erik; place names, such as Grimsby; and the names of the days of the week. We have wonderful craft and artwork and great burial mounds, some containing ships of brilliant design and grace. We have the legacy of items, such as chess, that the Vikings brought back from their travels, and we have the lasting legacy of an early democracy which has continued to affect our society right up to the present day.



From an ivory chess piece showing a Viking warrior before battle (a berserker!)

Section 1:

How do we know about the Vikings?

In this section pupils will consider a series of different types of sources, extract information about the Vikings, and make deductions and inferences. The activities are best approached as a set so that pupils gain an overview of the types of evidence available. Alternatively, groups of pupils could work on one activity, or two linked activities, and then report back to the class. A grid is provided at the end of the section to help organise the pupils' findings and draw out specific learning outcomes generated by the question 'How do we know?'.

Activities 1–4

Knut case study

Activity sheet 1

The Vikings on themselves

This activity takes runes as the starting point for investigating the Vikings. The activity requires keen observation and deduction. Pupils should note their findings around the source and then think of questions to ask, based on what they have learnt. Discussion of the source could be used to illustrate the geographical and political links between eleventh-century Scandinavia and England.

Activity sheet 2

Who was Knut?

This activity is designed to help pupils interpret a pictorial source. It provides a series of categories by which they can sort their ideas. Pupils are encouraged to discuss and share their ideas about Knut, and to consider ways of finding out more information. It may be useful to raise the issue of bias, reflecting who commissioned the manuscript and their motivation for doing so. Pupils are asked to draw a simple grid to record and compare data for the sources used in this activity and on Activity sheet 3. Through this, pupils can begin to explore the concept of source correlation, identifying how one source may support another.

Activity sheet 3

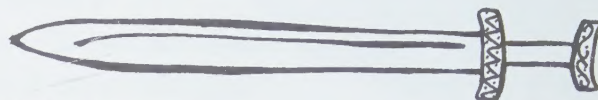
What do others say?

Two secondary written sources provide further information about Knut. Using the same categories as for Activity sheet 2, pupils are invited to underline parts of the text, drawing out relevant information. Having added this information to the grid they drew up for Activity sheet 2, pupils should then draw comparisons between the two sources and with Source X, a contemporary, primary source.

Activity sheet 4

What do we know about King Knut?

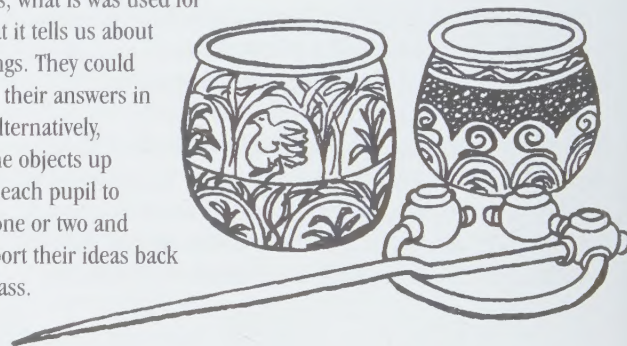
Pupils are invited to make historical judgements about King Knut, based on the evidence they have uncovered. Encourage them to look back at their grid, which should have their ideas organised and ready to interpret. Discuss Source Z, the saga and emphasise the importance of storytelling and the oral tradition in learning about the Vikings.



Activity sheet 5

Messages from the grave

This activity focuses on the major historical source for any study of the Vikings: archaeology. Objects recovered from a Viking grave at York illustrate the types of artefacts we have the most knowledge about and raise questions about their interpretation. Pupils are required to consider the evidence and make inferences about what the grave and its contents tell us of the person buried and the Viking way of life in York. As an extension activity, ask the pupils to look at each object carefully and decide what it is, what it was used for and what it tells us about the Vikings. They could draw up their answers in a grid. Alternatively, divide the objects up and ask each pupil to look at one or two and then report their ideas back to the class.



Activity sheet 6

Signposts and footprints to the past

Place names provide a rich source of evidence about settlement patterns. In this activity pupils are reminded that the Vikings were only one society to settle in Britain. Pupils are asked to colour places with names of different origin on a map of Britain, enabling them to see the distribution of Roman, Saxon and Viking settlements, and think about what this distribution shows. Discuss the role rivers play in settlement, especially for the Vikings. Refer to the map on Activity sheet 2, Section 4, which shows Viking travels across Europe. Rivers provided the Vikings with easy routes inland. As an extension activity the pupils could take a map of dense Danish or Norse settlement (use an OS map) and, using a more detailed list of Viking terms, trace or colour the distribution of Viking place names. The class could be divided into groups to study and compare different areas.

Activity sheet 7

Map of Roman, Saxon and Viking place names

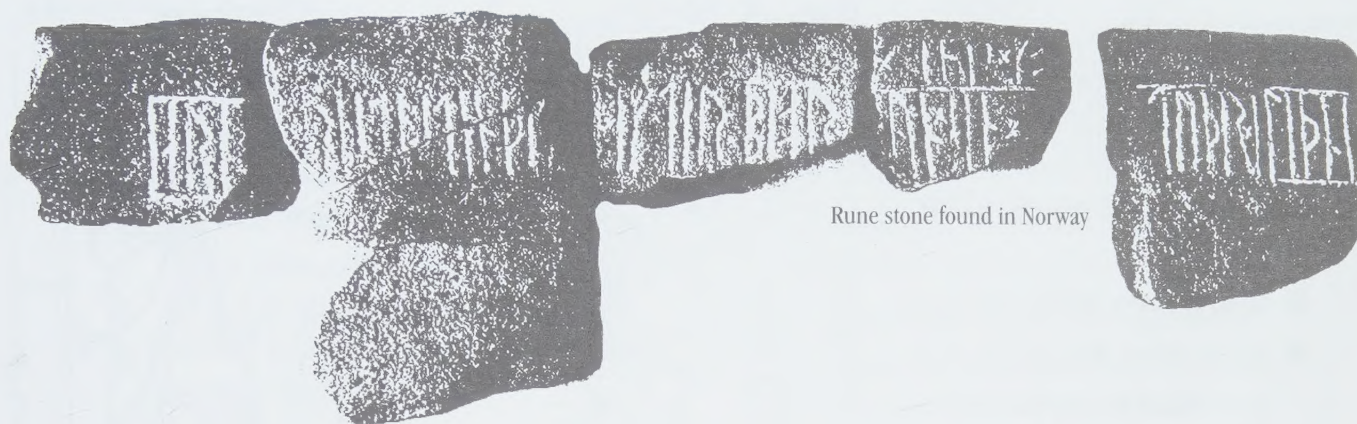
For use with Activity sheet 6.

Name: _____

The Vikings on themselves

Activity sheet 1

Very little of what the Vikings wrote remains, only a few carved stones and artefacts. These are written in 'runes'. You can see a runic alphabet at the bottom of the page.



Rune stone found in Norway

Translated, the stone says:

'Arnsteinn raised this stone in the memory of Bjor, his son. He was killed when Knut attacked England.'



Around the picture note down what the inscription tells us.



What questions could you ask to find out more?

.....

.....

.....

.....

One version of the Viking runic alphabet

1	B	Y	1	1	Y	Y	*	1	Y	1	Y	1	K	Y	R	4	1	N	Y	1	Y				
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z

from *The Vikings*
(British Museum Press)

Name:

Who was Knut?

Activity sheet 2

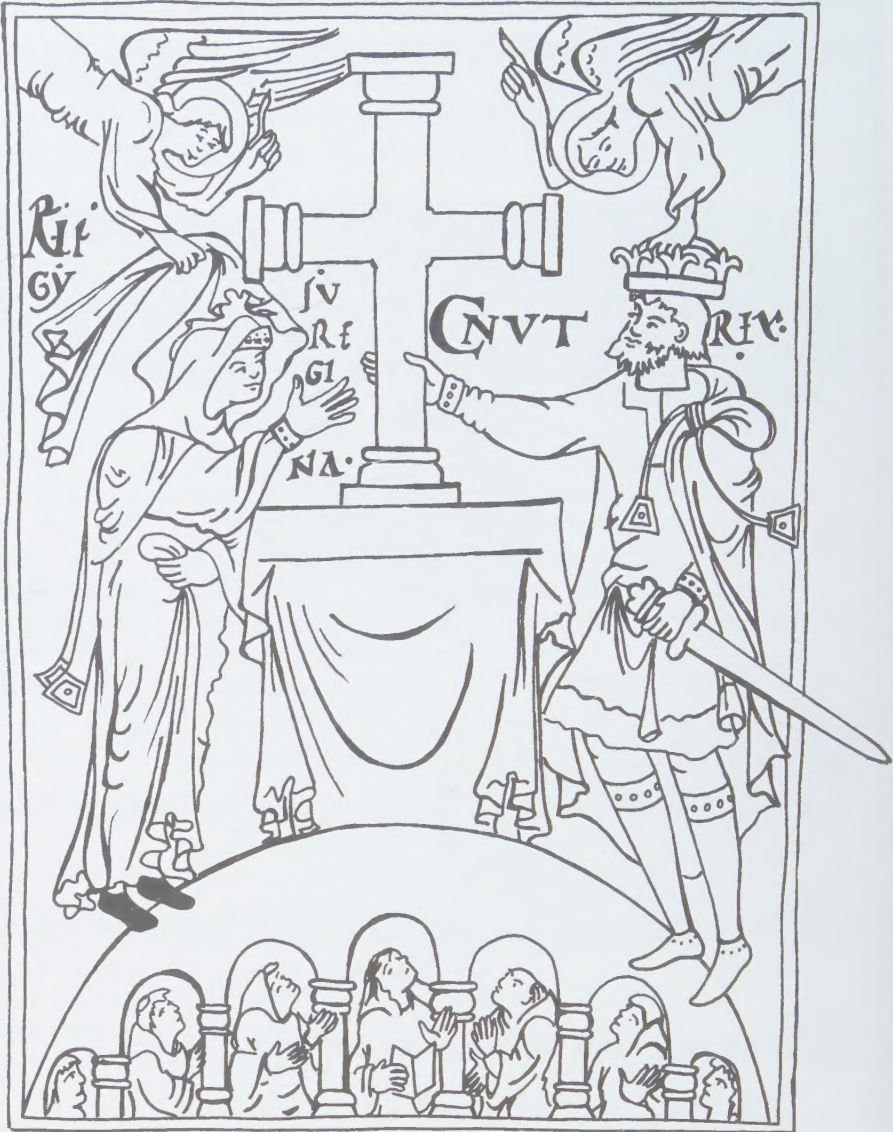
On Activity sheet 1 you may have asked, ‘Who was Knut and when did he live?’ Here is a picture to help you find out.



- In a group:
- Describe the people in the picture.
 - Who do you think they are?
 - What other things can you see? What is happening?
 - What words are there ?



- Talk about:
- What this picture tells you about Knut.
 - Where else you could look to find out more about Knut.



Source X
From a manuscript found in Winchester Cathedral



Draw a grid, following the example below, and fill in your answers
(you will be adding to this in the next activity, so leave space for Source Y and Source Z)

	Source X	Source Y	Source Z
Appearance			
People			
Events			
Words			

What do others say?

Activity sheet 3

Most of the written evidence we have was not written by the Vikings themselves but by people who met or saw them. Some was written by people who heard stories and wrote about them much later.

Here are two written sources which talk about Knut (or Cnut):

- 1014

In this year Swein died and all chose Cnut, his son, as their king.
- 1016

King Edmund of Wessex, the son of the last English king, Ethelred, met King Cnut at Ashingdon where there was a great battle which Cnut won. On St. Andrew's day (30 November) King Edmund died.
- 1016

In this year Cnut was chosen king.
- Also in this year, Cnut commanded Emma, the widow of the late King Ethelred, to become his queen.*
- 1027

In this year King Cnut went to Rome to visit the Pope.
- 1035

In this year King Cnut died on 12 November at Shaftesbury. His body was taken to Winchester where it was buried.

Source Y

Extracts from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle

- 

Choose 4 colours:

 - With colour 1 underline all the references to people.
 - With colour 2 underline all the things that happen.
 - With colour 3 underline descriptions of Knut's appearance.
 - With colour 4 underline all the words about royalty.

- 

Transfer the information from the text to your grid from Activity sheet 2.

- 

What information is the same for Source X and Source Y?

Both sources show _____

- 

What information is the same for Source X and Source Z?

Both sources show _____

Cnut was exceptionally tall and strong, and the handsomest of men except for his nose which was thin, high-set and rather hooked. He had a fair complexion and a fine head of hair. His eyes were better than those of other men, being both more handsome and keener-sighted. He was a generous man, a great warrior, valiant, victorious and the happiest of men in style and grandeur.

Source Z

Extract from Knytlinga Saga c.1250

Name: _____

What do we know about King Knut?

Activity sheet 4



List all the things you have read about Knut.

.....

.....

.....

.....



Penny of Knut 'the Great' minted in
Norway c.1018–20
(*The Vikings*, British Museum Press)



Which of these do you think are probably true?

.....

.....



Now make a list of things you don't know about Knut.

.....

.....



Look back at your grid and note any ways Sources X, Y and Z don't agree.

.....

.....



Source Z, the saga, was written in the thirteenth century, over 200 years after Knut died. How did the writer know what Knut was like?

.....

.....



How accurate do you think his description is?

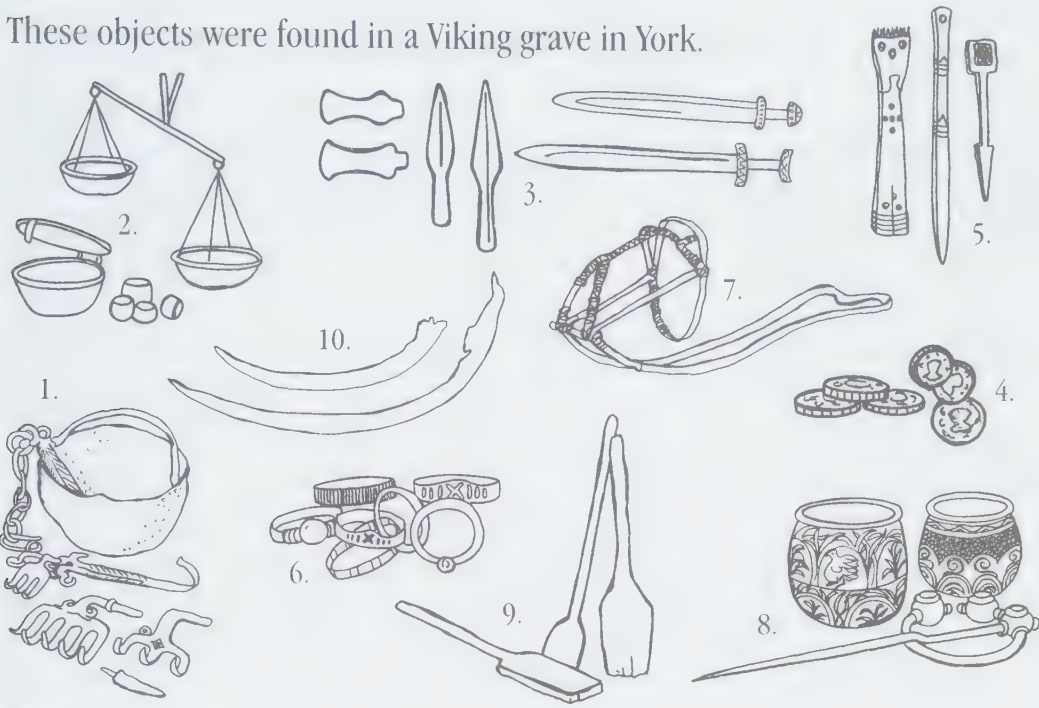
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Messages from the grave

Activity sheet 5

These objects were found in a Viking grave in York.



- Key
- 1. Bronze cooking pot, iron chain and hooks
 - 2. Bronze weighing scales, bronze weights and bowl
 - 3. Two iron swords, two iron spearheads, two bronze axe heads
 - 4. Six gold coins
 - 5. Three bone objects
 - 6. Bronze and gold arm bands or bracelets
 - 7. Bridle
 - 8. Two gold bowls and a cloak pin
 - 9. Agricultural tools
 - 10. Two iron sickle blades

Which objects suggest that the man was a warrior?

Which objects suggest he was a farmer?

Which objects suggest he was a trader?

Which sentence from the list below do you think is most likely?

- a) The man was a fighter most of the time.
- b) The man was a farmer most of the time.
- c) The man was a trader most of the time.
- d) There were two men buried here, one a fighter and one a farmer.
- e) The man was a fighter and a farmer.
- f) The man was a farmer, a trader and a fighter.

Why?

Name: _____

Signposts and footprints to the past

Activity sheet 6

The names of many villages and towns in Britain have come from the Romans, Saxons and Vikings.

 Look at the place-name endings on Activity sheet 7 and colour the circles in different colours to show whether the place is of Roman, Saxon or Viking origin. Use the key to help you.

 Look for the circles you have coloured to show Viking origin.

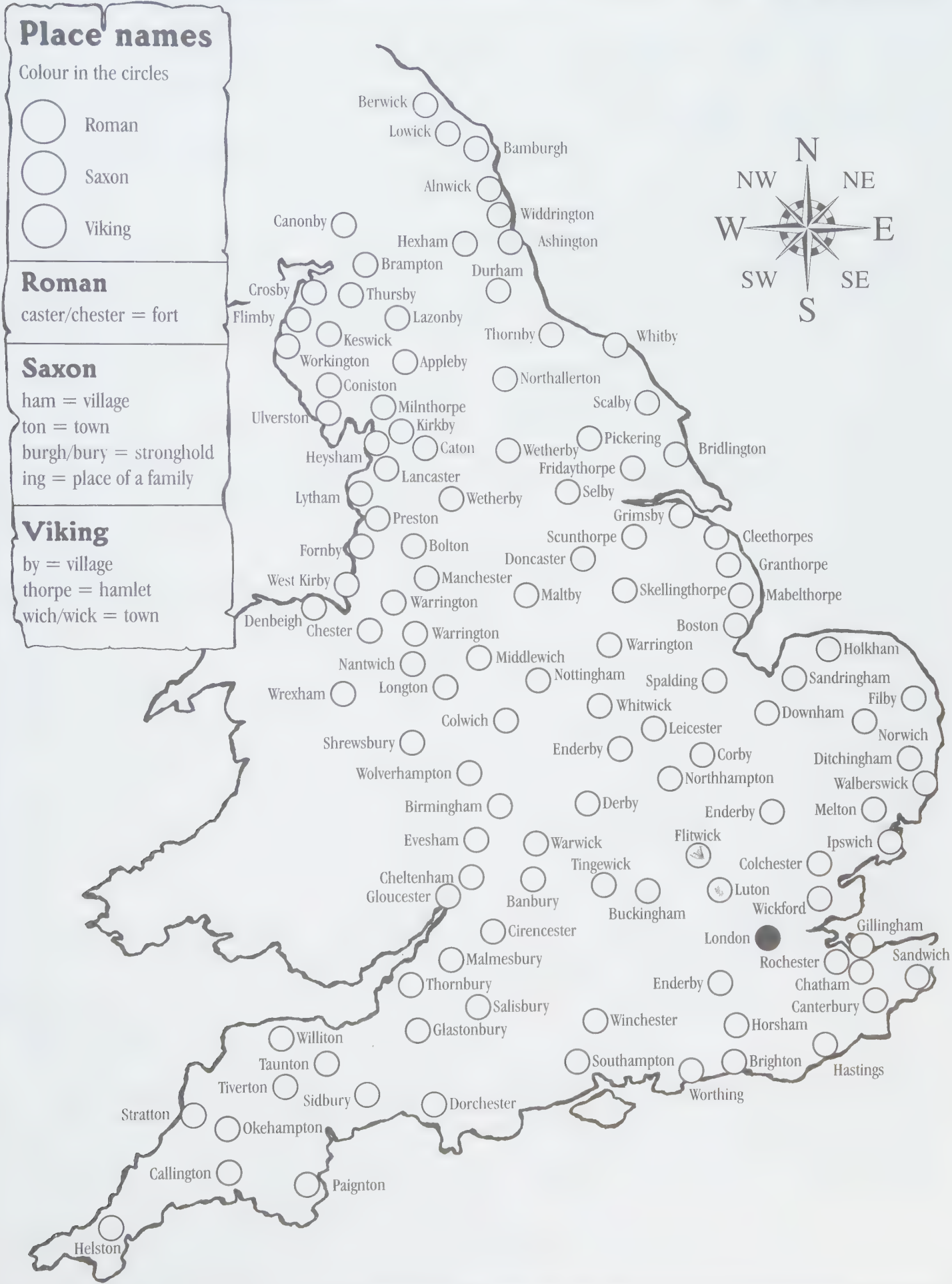
⊕ Are most of the Viking settlements on the coast or inland?

⊕ Why do you think this is?

⊕ Are most of the Viking settlements in the N, NE, E, SE, S, SW, W, NW?

⊕ Why do you think this is?

⊕ Why does the rest of the country have so few Viking place names?



Section 2:

Why did the Vikings settle in certain places?

Activity sheet 1

Why did the Vikings become good sailors?

In this activity pupils are asked to text mark in different colours, helping them to access information. Key information is then transferred to a grid. This activity highlights the areas the Vikings came from, now known as Denmark, Norway and Sweden, and explores the geographical features of these areas which led the Vikings to develop their sailing expertise. Before beginning the activity, discuss what a geographical feature is and model text marking on a large sheet of paper or the board. The sentence starter can be used as it is or a writing frame sheet could be produced for each child to complete.

Activity sheet 2

How did the Vikings know about other places to go?

Pupils are asked to examine a picture of a number of items that have been found in a buried Viking hoard. They must then locate their likely origin on a map of the Viking world (Activity sheet 3). This activity highlights the range of goods valued by the Vikings, their trading partners, and the distances they travelled in order to trade. Pupils are asked to consider how they might have got these goods. This activity could be extended to explore the nature of trading, considering what makes things valuable, and the dangers and distances involved in obtaining some goods. Pupils could look at where goods were produced and list the difficulties they faced in getting them home. They could role-play trading these items, bartering for the best deal.



The second half of this activity explores how Vikings decided where to go. Information is given about four Vikings. Using the information provided on the map of the Viking world (Activity sheet 3) pupils must decide where it would be best for each of the Vikings to go. As an extension activity, they could elaborate on each character and the reasons for their decision, and write a story about what happens to them when they reach their destination.

Activity sheet 3

Map of the Viking world

This map provides useful information about the Viking world needed for Activity sheet 2.

Activity sheet 4

How did the Vikings decide whether to stay or go?

This activity asks pupils to consider six different scenarios. For each they must first picture the event and consider the costs and benefits of different actions. They must then decide what they would do if they were a Viking. This activity can be done as a whole class, with the teacher reading out each scenario in turn, or by groups or individuals reporting back to the class later. Pupils could draw a storyboard to illustrate each scenario and what they would do. As an extension activity they could research what real Vikings did in similar situations.

Activity sheet 5

Why did Vikings leave their homelands?

In this activity pupils are first asked to brainstorm why people move away. Their ideas are then used to inform analysis of four Viking case studies which highlight that, although there were general reasons why Vikings emigrated there were also specific reasons for individuals. Pupils are asked to empathise with the Vikings who did leave and consider whether their motives were similar to or different from the reasons why people move today. Pupils could then consider why many Vikings did not move away.

Activity sheet 6

Where did the Vikings raid, trade and settle?

This second text-marking activity builds on Activity sheet 1. It highlights that over a 400-year period the Vikings raided, traded and settled across a wide area. Pupils are asked to read the text and underline dates and key words describing what happened. They must then draw up a grid, and enter the dates in chronological order, the relevant places, and what happened. As a class, talk about all the different things the Vikings did. Ask the pupils to complete the prompt. As an extension activity, groups of pupils could research the events mentioned in the text and find out about other people involved, other geographic features in the area, and other events that preceded or followed.



Read the text below.

- Underline in red all the names of countries.
- Underline in blue all the geographical features.

The Vikings came from the countries we now call Norway, Sweden and Denmark. In Norway the high mountains and long inlets from the sea (fjords) made overland travel difficult. However, sailing on the fjords was quick and safe and protected from storms at sea. Sweden’s rivers and lakes were the best routes through the thick forests.

Denmark had many islands, and boats were the most important form of transport.

Much of the land had poor, thin soil. Parts of Norway and Sweden were covered with snow and ice for many months of the year. Only Denmark had areas of good farmland, but even Denmark had a lot of poor heathland. Because the land was so poor for farming, fishing was a very important source of food.



Use the information from the text to fill in the grid below:

Viking homelands	Geographical features



Complete the sentence:

The Vikings became good sailors because

.....

.....

Name: _____

How did the Vikings know about other places to go?

Activity sheet 2

Look at the pile of Viking goods and treasures below. Some have been found in buried Viking hoards, others we know about from written sources.



 Use the Map of the Viking world (Activity sheet 3, p.15) to find out where these objects might have come from. Write the places of origin around the picture and draw a line linking each object to its possible origins.

 How do you think the Vikings might have got these things?

 Use the map and information on Activity sheet 3 to decide where you would go in each of these situations.

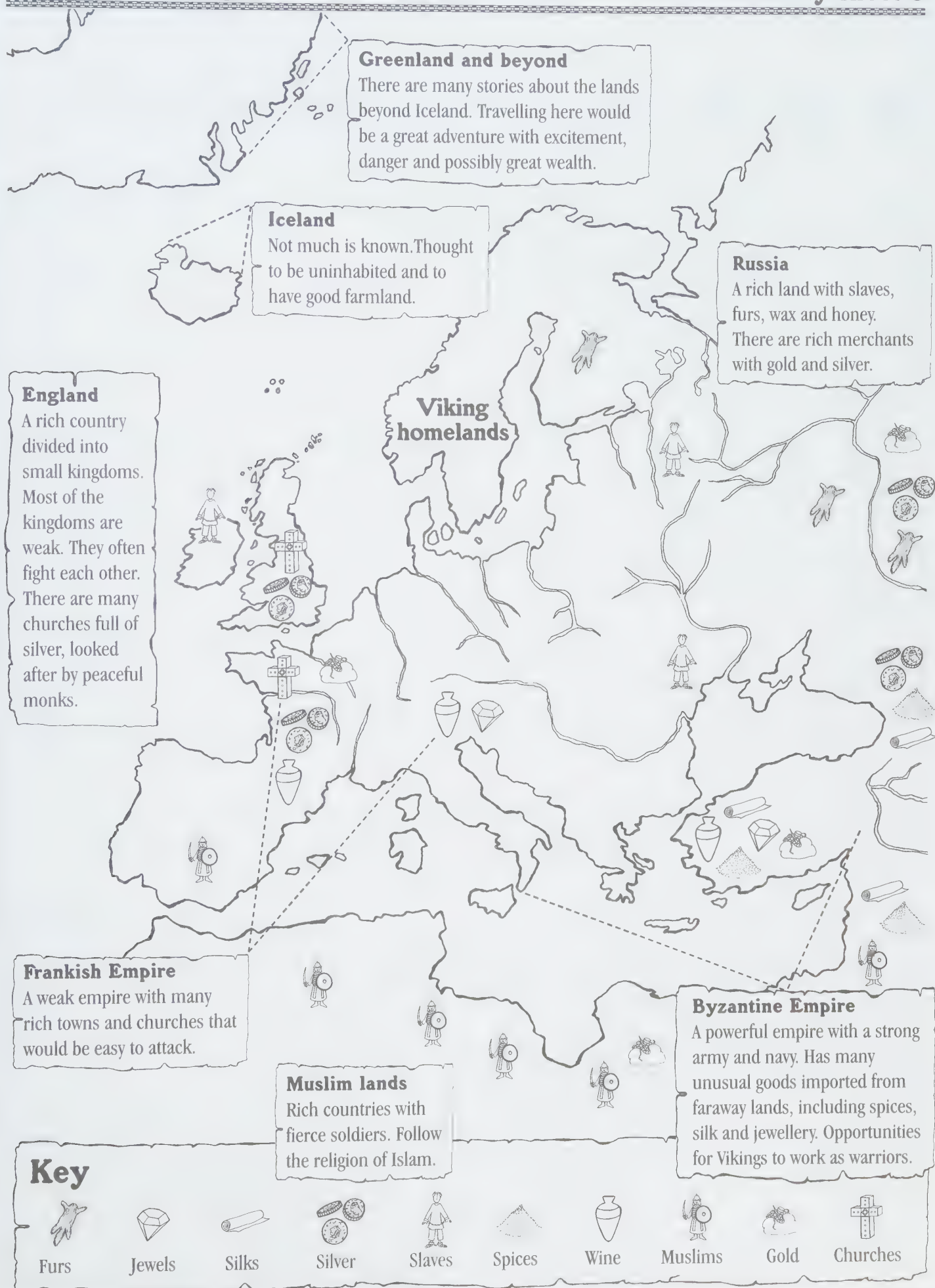
- Your farm can no longer feed all the children. You have decided to leave and find new land. You do not want to fight so you would prefer somewhere uninhabited.
- You have a band of men and have been raiding the English coast. Now you want more adventure and a chance of greater riches.
- You have ships full of furs and walrus ivory to trade and are looking for the best deal.
- You were exiled from your homeland and became a pirate. You and your men are now tired and are looking for an easier life.

Name: _____

Section 2: Why did the Vikings settle in certain places?

Map of the Viking world

Activity sheet 3



How did the Vikings decide whether to stay or go?**Activity sheet 4**

 Look at each of the following situations and decide what you would do if you were a Viking. Consider the costs and benefits of your actions.

What happens	What do you do?
You lead a Viking raiding party. You row your longship up onto the beach and everyone leaps out. You race up to a monastery where you find gold and silver. The monks are so surprised, they just run and hide.	
You lead a raiding party. You row your longship onto the beach and race up to the monastery. This time the villagers resist and you have to batter down the doors and fight hard. The monks have hidden all their precious things. You can't find much silver or gold.	
Your raiding party sails up a river. You sack some villages. The local people run for their lives, leaving everything behind. There is no silver but the barns are full of grain and the pigs and sheep look fat. The weather is turning bad.	
You and your men are tired after years of raiding. The villagers are fighting harder. Many of your men have been killed. There is less and less gold and silver.	
You explore to the north. You don't find rich towns but the people are friendly and show you good places to hunt and fish. You return home with a ship full of furs and walrus ivory.	
The harvest has failed and there will be little food this winter. You have heard stories about a large uninhabited island with good farmland to the north.	

Do you know anyone who has moved away to a new home? It could be a friend, someone in your family, or a neighbour. Why did they move?

 Write down all the reasons you can think of why people move house. Swap ideas with other pupils.

 Draw a table like the one below and fill in your ideas under the correct headings.

To escape danger	To get richer	To be happier	To have more excitement	Other

 Consider the information about the four Vikings below. In a group, talk about:

- ✿ Why they left.
- ✿ Whether their reasons for leaving were the same as, similar to or different from those in your table.

Thorolf

King Harald Finehair and his mighty army have taken over all the land, sea and rivers. We do not want to accept him as our lord. Many people have decided to leave and make a new life in Orkney and Shetland, the Hebrides, Ireland, Iceland and even further. I am going too.

Auth the deep-minded woman

I learnt that my son had been killed and realised that I had no further prospects. My son’s enemies would not hurt me but they would take his land and his power. I had to leave.

Eric the Red

I had to leave Norway because I was accused of some killings. I decided to go to Iceland to start a farm. After I had been there for some time, I was accused of some killings again so I had to leave there too. I decided to explore a big, uninhabited land I’d heard of to the west. Most was covered with ice but I found some good farmland and settled there.

Eric Bloodaxe

My father was the King of Norway. When he died I wanted to become King. I killed two of my brothers but my half-brother, Hakon, became King and I had to flee. I took some ships and some of my men and we became pirates.

Where did the Vikings raid, trade and settle?

Activity sheet 6

The Vikings were not just violent raiders, they were also farmers, fishermen, craftsmen and traders. They explored uninhabited lands and settled peacefully in some of them.

-  Read the text below.
-  Underline all the dates in red.
-  Underline the key words about what happened in blue.

Between AD 700 and AD 800 the Vikings raided west from Scandinavia. In AD 793 they attacked the monastery on the isle of Lindisfarne in north-east England. Two years later they attacked the monastery at Iona in Scotland and raids on Ireland started.

The first settlements outside Scandinavia were established about AD 800 in the Orkney, Shetland and Faroe Islands.

In AD 845 they sailed up the River Seine and held Paris to ransom.

Around AD 850 some Vikings stayed over the winter in England instead of returning home.

By AD 870 Iceland was being settled and the east of England was controlled by the Vikings.

By AD 911 Rollo had set up a colony in western France which was later called Normandy.

In AD 982 Eric the Red landed in Greenland and from AD 986 people began to set up farms there.

About AD 1000 Leif Ericsson reached America and a colony was set up at L'Anse aux Meadows.

-  Draw a grid like the example below and fill in all the dates in the correct order.
-  Next to each date write the place mentioned and key words about what happened.

Date	Place	Trade/raid/settle

-  Complete the sentence:

The Vikings were fierce and violent raiders. However, they also _____

Section 3:

What was Viking society like?

Activity sheet 1

What jobs did the Vikings do?

This activity introduces the idea that although the Vikings are well known for their raiding and pillaging, they also had 'ordinary' jobs; for example as fishermen, blacksmiths or farmers. Pupils are given four extracts from original Viking texts and asked to deduce the job being described. They are then asked to think of other jobs the Vikings did and to write a description of each in the style of the Viking texts. This could be extended to a discussion of the writing styles of the texts, when they were written, and when and by whom they were translated.

Activity sheet 2

How were decisions made?

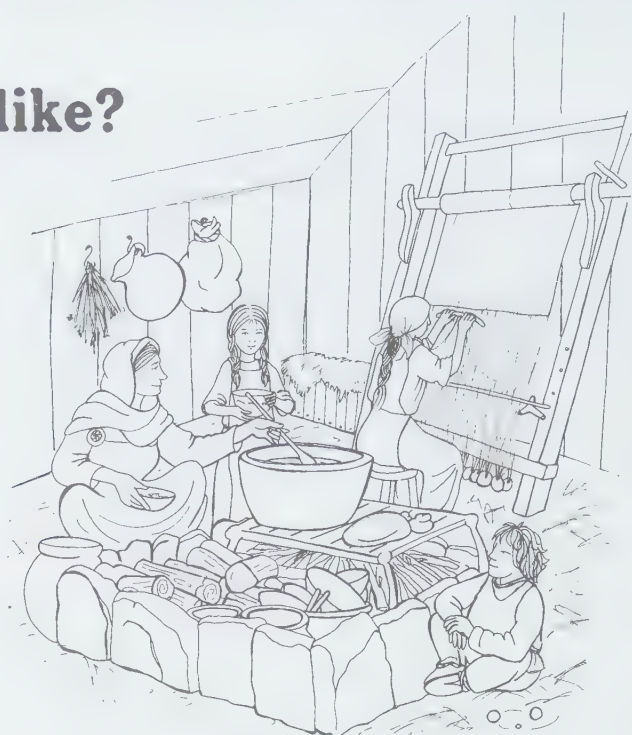
This activity asks pupils to think about how people sort out problems and make decisions today and then consider two very different ways the Vikings tackled problems. The approaches explored highlight two seemingly contradictory aspects of Viking society: violence and democracy. Ask the pupils to consider whether these two methods are used to solve problems today. Give examples, such as the Gulf War or the day-to-day running of Parliament.



Activity sheet 3

What were the roles of men and women?

Pupils are asked to look at a selection of texts giving information about the roles of Viking men and women. The texts contain some direct information but also less obvious references which will require greater interpretation by the pupils. This activity demonstrates that while the role of Viking women was quite restricted, they also faced many dangers, in travelling overseas and in protecting the home while the men were away.



Activity sheet 4

What were the Vikings like?

This activity asks pupils to consider what they knew and thought about the Vikings before beginning the topic and then decide whether the evidence they have uncovered supports or challenges their original views. Discuss how, when we talk about the Vikings, we conjure up an image in our minds which may or may not be accurate. This activity also highlights that the Vikings were seen in different ways by different people and at different times. Having considered the image of a Viking warrior, pupils could write two descriptions, one in the first person about themselves and one in the third person from the perspective of a frightened monk.

Activity sheet 5

What did the Vikings farm and eat?

Reports in many of the sagas suggest that feasting was a favourite pastime of the Vikings. Evidence of the types of foods Vikings would have eaten is presented in a selection of passages. Pupils are then asked to read through the information and draw and label food for a Viking feast. All the sources are taken from recent textbooks. As an extension activity discuss how trustworthy the sources are and consider what might make a better source.

Activity sheet 6

How did the Vikings spend their time?

This simple dice game introduces pupils to a number of activities for which there is evidence of Viking involvement. Note that not all Vikings would have engaged in all the activities. Ask the pupils to play the game and then list the activities mentioned. Discuss whether or not they would have expected the Vikings to do these activities. Pupils could then undertake more detailed research and find out what evidence there is to suggest that the Vikings engaged in each activity. Pupils should present their findings, showing whether the evidence is from written sources, artefacts, or other clues such as place names.

What jobs did the Vikings do?

Activity sheet 1

Viking society was divided into three main groups: jarls, freemen and thralls. The jarls were lords. Thralls were slaves and worked for others. Freemen had a variety of jobs but also took time off to ‘go a-Viking’.

 Read these four pieces of writing by Vikings and complete the table below.

1. With a seed basket in one hand and sword in the other he went out to his cornfield and started to sow.
2. The man with the hood rowed against the tide while the bondi fished.
3. Early must the ... who will silver earn
Start at the bellows, blowing fire in blue black coal
Singing hammer I swing beating hard the steel
which red hot gleams and sparkles while greedy bellows blow
4. ... a strong helmet on his head ... In his hand he held a halberd, whose shaft was eight feet long and mounted with a four-edged spike and axe head.

	Work being done	Job
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

 What other jobs would the Vikings have done?

 On another sheet of paper write one or two lines about each job. Copy the Viking writing style of the examples above.

How were decisions made?

Activity sheet 2

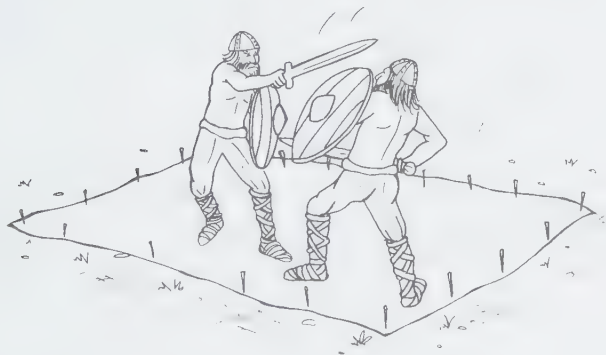
We have lots of ways of sorting out problems or making decisions.

 Can you add two more methods to the table?

Method	Have you ever used this method? When?	When else is this method used?
Toss a coin		
Have a vote		
Talk it through		
Fight		
Ask someone else to decide for you		

The Vikings had two very different methods of sorting out problems.

 Look at the pictures below and describe what you think is happening.



 Do we still use these methods to sort out problems today? Give examples.

What were the roles of men and women?

Activity sheet 3

 Read through the information below:

When Auth the Deep-minded learned that her son had been killed she realised that she had no further prospects ... so she had a ship built in secret, in the forest, and when it was completed she loaded it with valuables and prepared for a voyage. She took all her surviving family with her.

John Haywood, *Penguin History Atlas of Vikings*

Spindle-whorls (for spinning thread) were found at the American Viking settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows.

A Viking wife runs the household. The thralls help her do the everyday jobs – cooking, spinning and weaving – and are disciplined if they misbehave. The woman of the house is also in charge of the keys to the chests which contain the family valuables. When her husband leaves to go raiding, he publicly hands over his keys as a sign that she is now in charge of both the house and the farm.

John Clare, *I Was There – Vikings*

Men were buried with weapons and tools; women with jewellery, needlework, weaving equipment, and other household utensils that would be useful in the afterlife.

Laxdaela Saga, *Penguin History Atlas of Vikings*

Each woman wore on her bosom a container made of iron, silver, copper or gold – its size and substance depending on her man's wealth. Attached to the container was a ring carrying her knife. Round her neck she wore gold or silver rings.

Ibn Fadlan about northern traders met on the River Volga

Helga and Gird (her daughter) work hard at home all year round. Hard work has made Helga strong. Like many of the Scandinavian women she is tough, sharp-tongued and strong-willed.. She has to be, while Sven (her husband) is at sea she has to keep the servants in order and protect the farm from thieves and wild animals. Her main task is to make food for the family. She also makes clothes.

Alan Steel, *The Vikings*

 Tick the boxes to show whether Viking women, men, or both did each of the following activities.

	Farming	Arts and crafts	Boat-building	Making clothes	Settling new lands	Exploring expeditions	Raiding trips	Trading voyages
Women								
Men								

Name: _____

What were the Vikings like?

Activity sheet 4

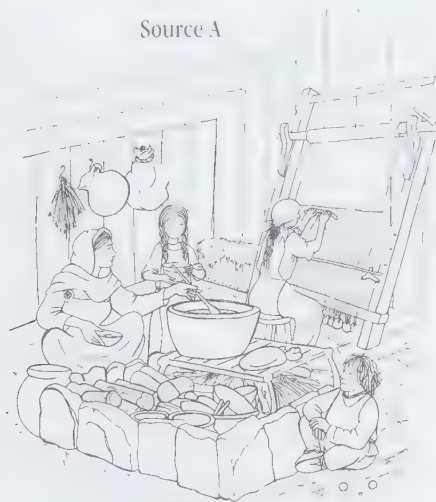
Think about what you knew about the Vikings before you began this topic. What did you think they looked like? What did you think they did?

 Complete the sentence below and draw a sketch of how you imagined Vikings to look.

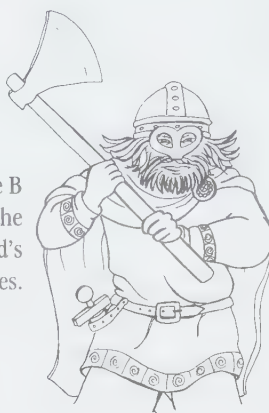
Before I started this topic I thought that Vikings

Here are some other descriptions and pictures of Vikings.

Source A

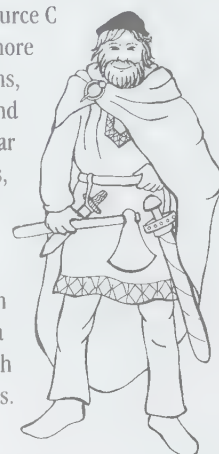


Source B
They are the filthiest of God's creatures.

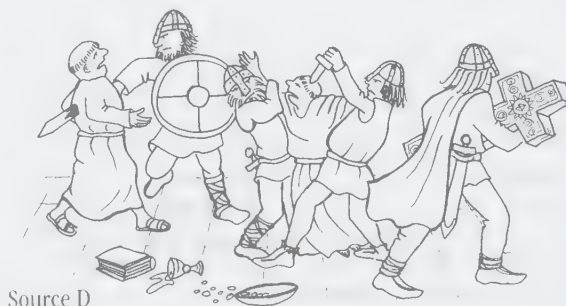


Source C

I have never seen more perfect physical specimens, tall as date palms, blond and ruddy. They wear neither tunics nor kaftans, but each man wears a cape which covers one side of his body, leaving one hand free. Each man has an axe, a sword and a knife and keeps them with him at all times.



Arab merchant Ibn Fadlan meeting Rus traders at Itil, AD 922



Source D

 Which of these sources support your original ideas of what the Vikings were like? Explain how.

 Which of them do not? Explain how.

Name: _____

What did the Vikings farm, hunt and eat?

Activity sheet 5



Read these descriptions of Viking food.

The diet of many Vikings was varied and nourishing. Meat and fish were dried or eaten raw. Wild fruits and vegetables supplemented cultivated peas, beans and cabbage. They ate bread made of barley or rye, and porridge made from oats and barley; grain was also important for making beer. Honey was used to make mead, but the strongest drink was home-made wine made from fermented fruit juices. Milk would also have been drunk, all forms of dairy produce were important.

The Vikings, British Museum Press

At a feast meat was usually spit-roasted or boiled but men sometimes just warmed the meat inside their shirts and ate it raw. A great deal of fish was eaten – raw, dried, pickled, smoked or salted. Sausages were made from lard, blood and meat. The food was seasoned with garlic, mustard and horseradish, and sometimes with spices brought by traders from the East. Ale and imported wine were served.

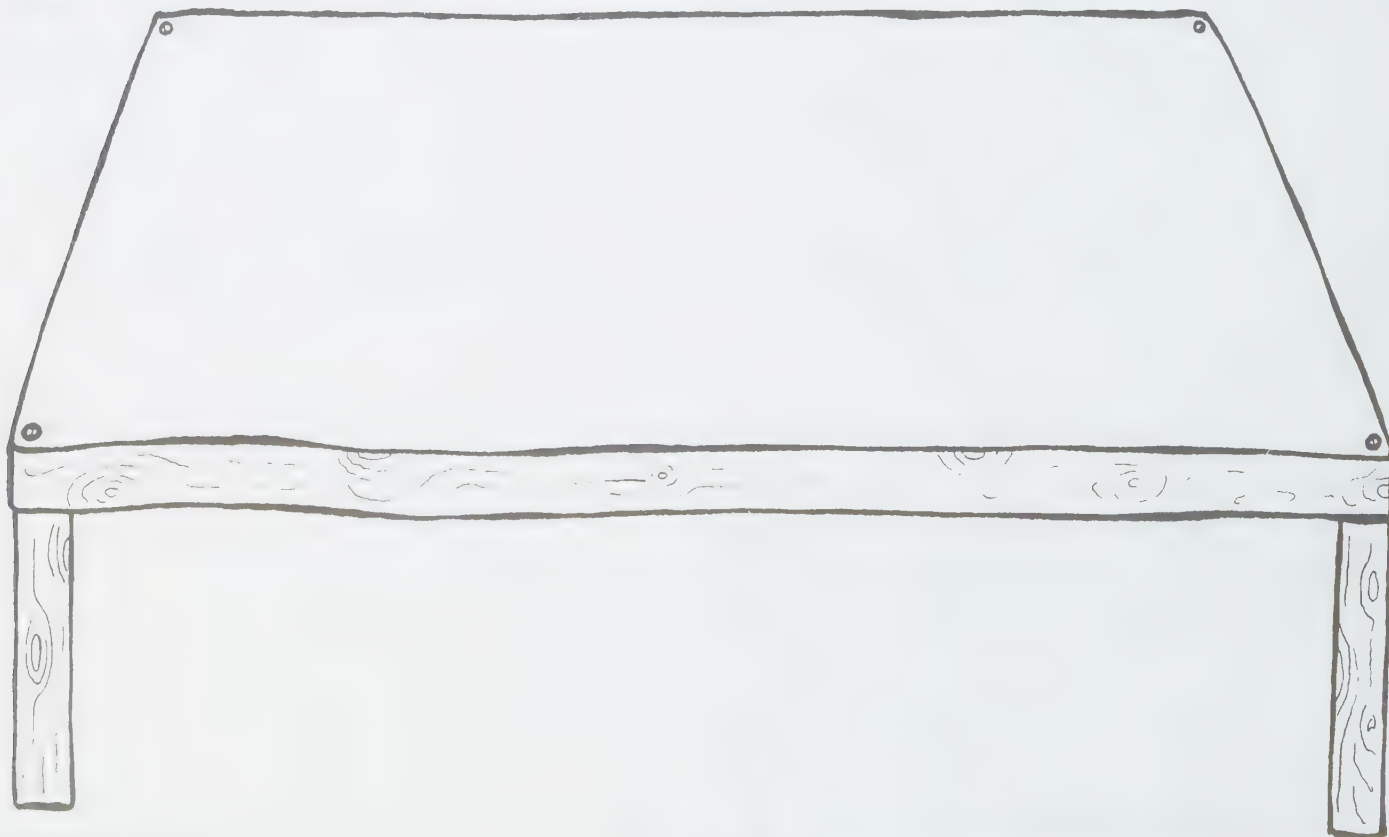
John Clare, *I Was There – Vikings*

All sorts of fruit pips and stones have been found at Viking sites. They show that the Vikings ate apples, plums, berries and nuts. They also ate vegetables, including cabbage, carrots and parsnips.

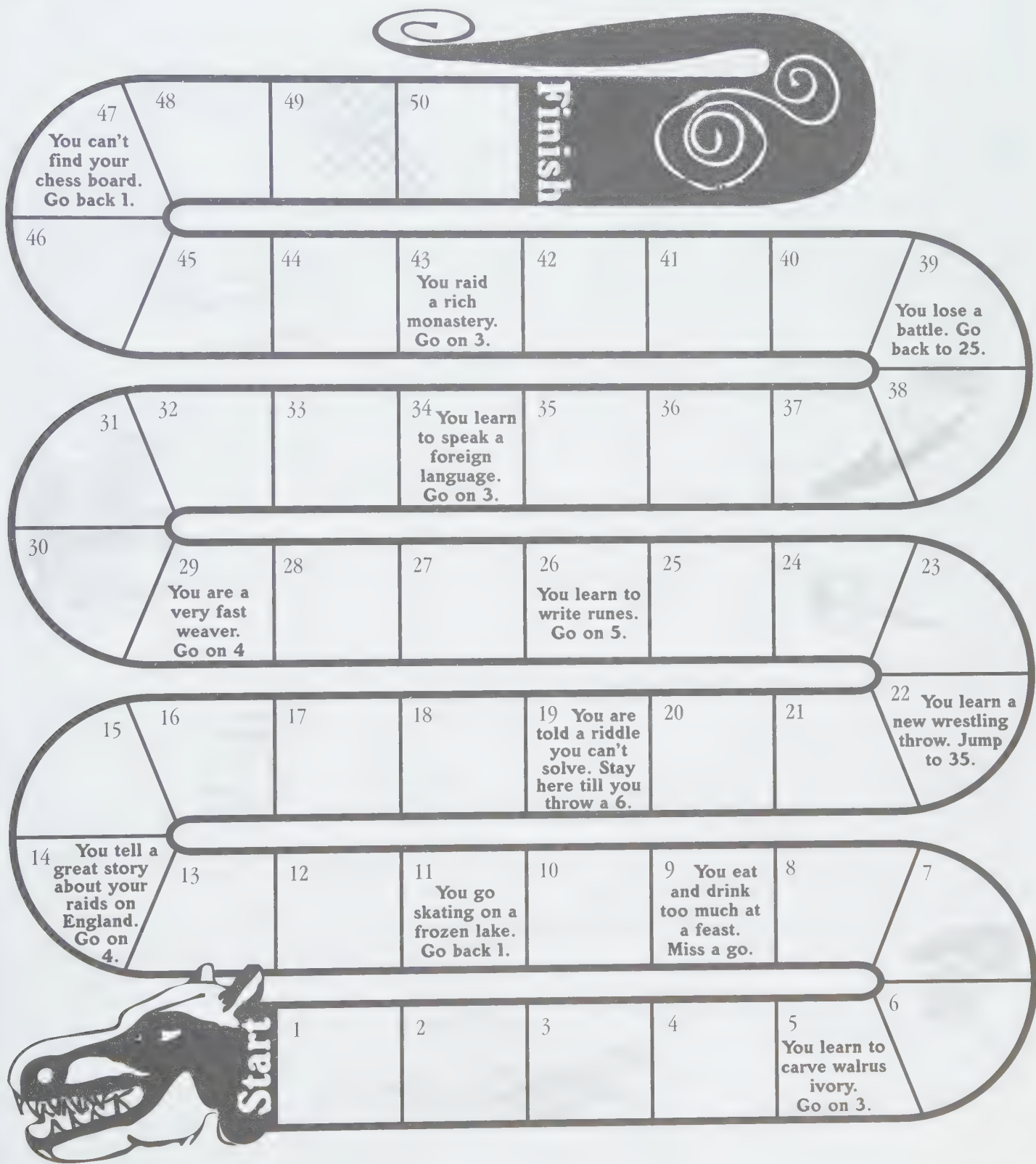
History in Evidence – Viking Britain



Harald is giving a feast. Draw and label a table full of food for his guests.



 Find two counters and dice and play this game with a friend.



Start

1

2

3

4

5 You learn to carve walrus ivory. Go on 3.

6

7

8

9 You eat and drink too much at a feast. Miss a go.

10

11 You go skating on a frozen lake. Go back 1.

12

13

14 You tell a great story about your raids on England. Go on 4.

15

16

17

18

19 You are told a riddle you can't solve. Stay here till you throw a 6.

20

21

22 You learn a new wrestling throw. Jump to 35.

23

24

25

26 You learn to write runes. Go on 5.

27

28

29 You are a very fast weaver. Go on 4

30

31

32

33

34 You learn to speak a foreign language. Go on 3.

35

36

37

38

39 You lose a battle. Go back to 25.

40

41

42

43 You raid a rich monastery. Go on 3.

44

45

46

47 You can't find your chess board. Go back 1.

48

49

50

Finish

 On another sheet of paper, list all the activities mentioned in the game.

Section 4:

How and where did the Vikings travel?

Activity sheet 1

What were Viking ships like?

This activity introduces pupils to the idea that the Vikings had different types of boats for different purposes. Pupils are given illustrations and descriptions of two ships, the knarr and the longship. They are then asked to consider whether various features of ship design apply to the knarr, longship, or both, making them suitable for particular Viking activities. Pupils could then think of ways they might improve each ship for raiding, trading or settling.

Answers: K, K/L, L, K, L, K/L, K, L, K

Activity sheet 2

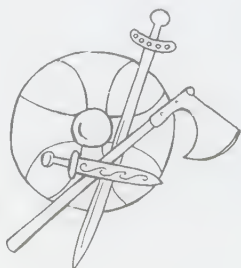
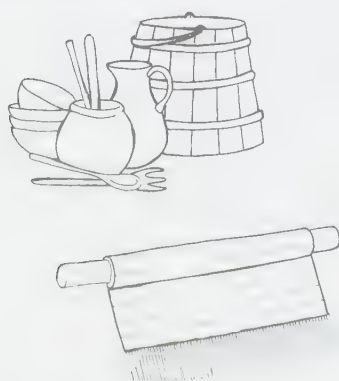
Where did the Vikings travel to?

Pupils are asked to read three descriptions of routes the Vikings would have sailed and plot them onto an outline map. This activity highlights that the Vikings travelled in all directions, exploring rivers and coastal routes as well as across oceans. As an additional activity pupils could write their own set of instructions, guiding sailors to other destinations on the map.

Activity sheet 3

What provisions did the Vikings need for their voyages?

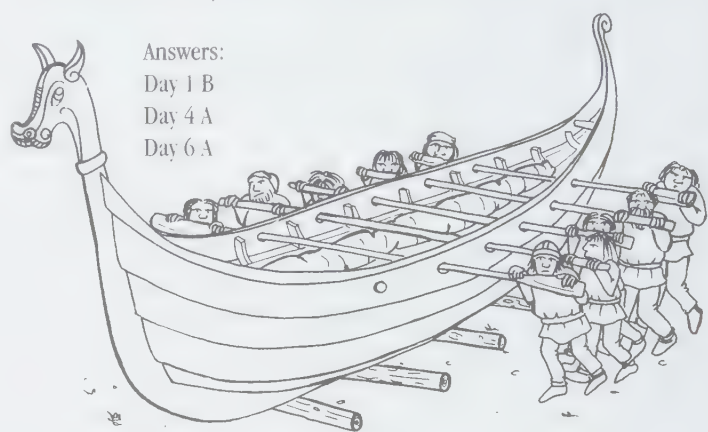
This activity asks pupils to prioritise different resources they might take on an expedition to settle new land. Encourage pupils to work in groups and discuss what they would need and what might be available when they arrive. Groups are then asked to cut out and diamond-rank items according to their importance. As an additional activity pupils could rank items in terms of their importance for other types of journeys; for exploration, raiding or trading. The items could also be sorted into different categories; for example, 'food and farming', 'shelter and warmth' and 'protection from enemies'.



Activity sheet 4

How did the Vikings navigate?

This activity highlights the difficulties Vikings faced navigating without the aid of magnetic compasses or modern equipment, particularly when out of sight of land. Pupils are given basic information on how to navigate by the sun and stars. Using the map on Activity sheet 2 they must then decide in which direction they would sail to reach Greenland.



Answers:
Day 1 B
Day 4 A
Day 6 A

Activity sheet 5

How did the Vikings move their ships?

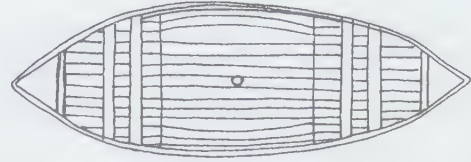
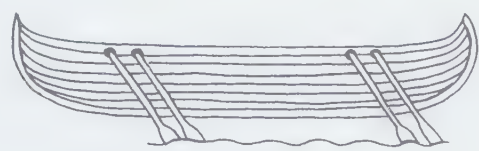
This activity highlights the versatility of Viking ships. Some could be sailed, rowed and dragged overland. This allowed them to reach otherwise inaccessible places. Pupils are given a set of sentences outlining part of a journey along a river. They are asked to put the sentences in order and illustrate each with a small picture. Ask the pupils to consider other methods the Vikings might have tried to move their ships overland. Why didn't they use wheeled trolleys or sledges?

Activity sheet 6

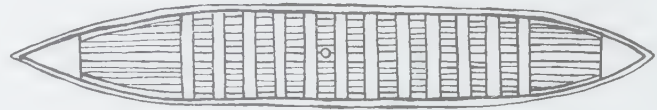
When did the Vikings reach different places?

This activity is based on a timeline of Viking expansion from their homeland, through western and eastern Europe, south to the Mediterranean, and west to Iceland, Greenland and beyond. It provides an opportunity to discuss key figures, places and dates in Viking expansion. Discussion should highlight that early raids on Britain were just the beginning of more than 400 years of raiding, trade and settlement. As an extension activity, pupils could produce their own timelines on specific themes, such as 'settlements' or 'Vikings in Britain', and set sorting activities for other pupils.

The Vikings had a number of different types of ship. Two of them, the knarr and the longship, are drawn and described below.



The knarr was heavier than the longship, but was still much lighter than many other Viking ships. The keel was cleverly shaped to sail well and sit safely on sandy beaches. It was broad, with high sides, decks at the bow and stern, and a large open hold in the middle for goods and animals. It had few oars and its small crew depended mainly on a single square sail.



The longship was low and slim, and even lighter than the knarr. It was built from very thin springy boards. It was designed to be rowed by a large crew of warriors and had many oars. It also had a single square sail. Its shallowness and lightness meant it could be beached quickly on raids, and dragged overland.

Which ship had the following features – the knarr (K), the longship (L) or both (K/L)?

	K, L or K/L
High sides to keep out stormy seas.	
A large sail for when the wind is blowing from the right direction.	
Many oarsmen, to deal with calms or winds blowing from the wrong direction.	
Space to carry large loads of goods to trade.	
Plenty of warriors to deal with pirates.	
Ability to land on sandy beaches without a harbour.	
Room for families and their possessions when sailing to settle overseas.	
Light weight so it could be hauled overland.	
Ability to carry stores for long voyages of exploration.	

Name: _____

Where did the Vikings travel to?

Activity sheet 2

 Read through the following descriptions. Plot the routes taken, on the map below, using different colours.

Route 1

From Hernar in Norway sail west. Pass north of the Shetland islands so that you can just see them in clear weather. Keep south of the Faroe Islands so that the top half of the mountains can be seen above the horizon. When you are south of land you will see birds and whales. Head north and you will come to an uninhabited island with good farm land.

*Adapted from Alan Steel, *The Vikings**

Route 2

From Hernar sail north along the coast of Norway. Follow the coast until you are heading due south. As the coast turns westward you will find a land where you can hunt walrus for ivory and trade for furs.

Route 3

From Hedeby sail due east passing south of the isle of Bornholm. Follow the coast to the east and then due north passing Gotland on your west. Head north-east until you pass east of two big islands, then head due east through a narrow passage. Sail on past the Land of the Finns and up a river to Lake Ladoga. Follow the River Volkhov south until you reach a great trading town.

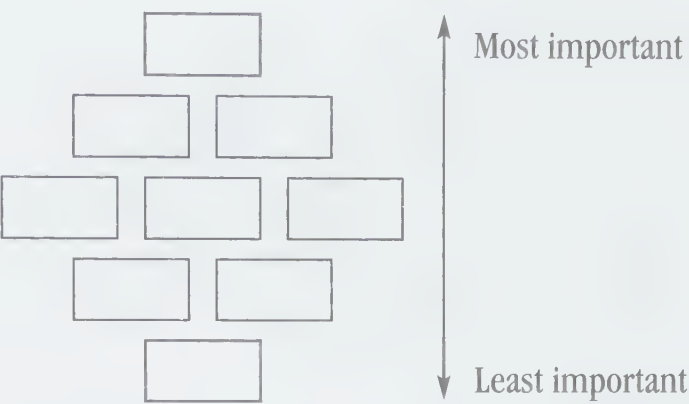
Map of western Europe to Greenland



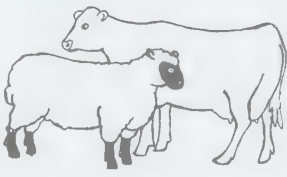
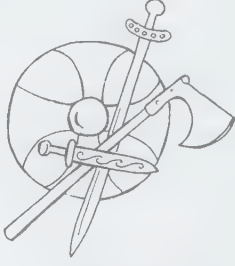
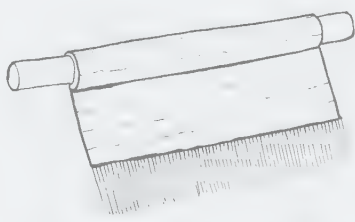
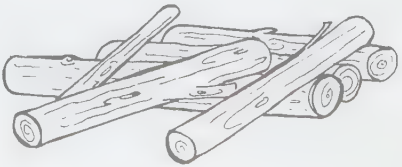
What provisions did the Vikings need for their voyages? Activity sheet 3

Look through all the items below. Which would be most important to take if you were setting up a farm in a new, uninhabited land? Think about what might already be there and what you would need when you arrived.

 In a group, cut out the items and diamond-rank them from most important to least important.





 Seeds to grow crops	 Farm animals	 Weapons
 Cooking utensils including pots	 Looms to make cloth	 Food
 Drinking water	 Waterproof sleeping bags	 Wood to build houses

 On another sheet of paper take the three items you have selected as most important and explain why you chose them.

How did the Vikings navigate?

Activity sheet 4

The Vikings did not have modern technology to help them navigate. They must have used their knowledge of the sun and stars.



Read the facts below:

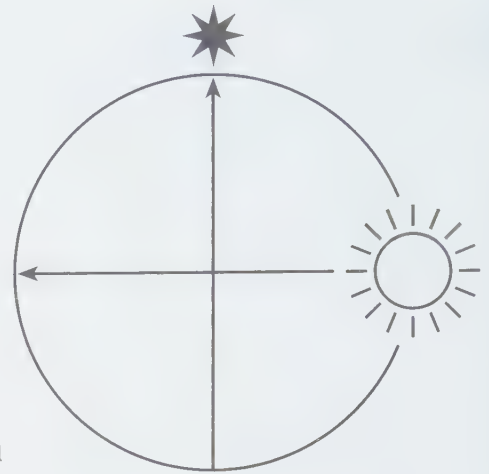
- ✱ The Pole Star is always to the north.
- ✱ The sun rises in the east and sets in the west.



Mark N, S, E and W on this diagram.



Use the information above and the map on Activity sheet 2 (p.28) to help you decide in which direction you would sail to reach Greenland.



Day 1. You are at Hernar, Norway. Your instructions say:

From Hernar sail due west to reach Greenland.

Do you:

- a) follow the coast?
- b) follow the sun to where it sets?
- c) wait for night and head towards the Pole Star?

Day 4. You have been blown too far north. Your instructions say:

Pass north of the Shetland Islands so that you can just see them in clear weather.

You decide to head south until you can just see the islands. Do you:

- a) sail away from the Pole Star?
- b) lower the sail and row into the wind?
- c) follow the sun to where it sets?

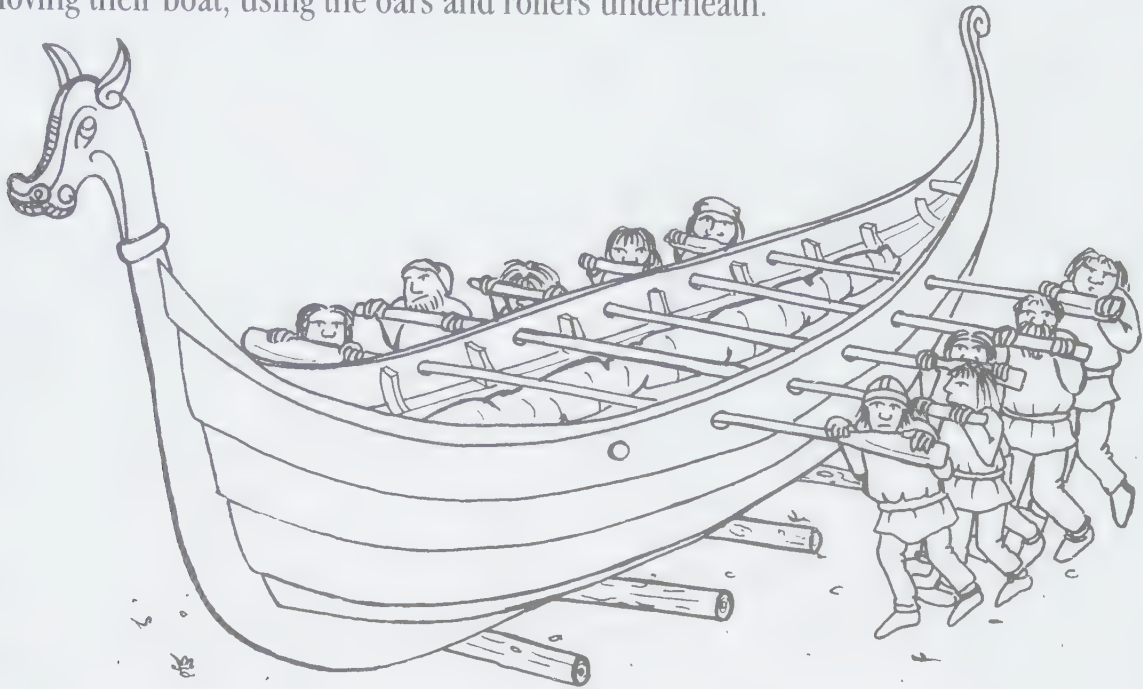
Day 6. You can see whales. Your instructions say:

When you are south of Iceland you will see birds and whales from the ship.

Do you:

- a) follow the sun to where it sets?
- b) head north to land?
- c) sail towards where the sun rises?

Some of the Viking ships were built so that they could be taken across land. This picture shows Viking sailors moving their boat, using the oars and rollers underneath.



Re-order the sentences below to describe how the Vikings travelled over seas, along rivers and across land. Draw a picture to illustrate each.

Order 1–6

Finally we launched the boat back into the river and sailed on.

When the wind dropped, we pulled on ropes to furl (close) the sail.

We then rowed using long oars.

The water became too shallow so we hauled the boat onto the land.

We put the oars across the boat, through the oar holes, and used them to push it over rollers.

At first the wind was blowing in the right direction so we used the sail.



On another piece of paper, draw a picture for each sentence and write what happened underneath.

When did the Vikings reach different places?

Activity sheet 6

 Cut out the statements at the bottom of the page and sort them into date order.

 How long is the period covered by the timeline?

 Find a map of the world. Place all the statements on the map in the correct locations.
Which is the most westerly place?

Which is the most easterly place?

 Find the statement which mentions a place in Britain. What happened there?

 Sort the statements into 3 piles:

 raiding  trading  settling

Which places were settled?



AD 793 – Raid on monastery at Lindisfarne, in north-east England.	AD 870 – Settlement in Iceland begins.	AD 860 – Vikings think they have sacked Rome in Italy, but it was Luna, 300 kms away.
AD 867 – York is captured by Vikings from Denmark.	AD 983 – Eric the Red goes to Greenland. Settlement begins in AD 986.	AD 900 – Norwegian Vikings settle in north-west England.
AD 1000 – Leif Ericsson lands on America.	AD 860 – Vikings from Sweden develop a trade centre at Novgorod.	AD 878 – King Alfred defeats Danish army led by Guthrun.

Section 5:

What legacy have the Vikings left us?

Activity sheet 1

The language we speak

Start this word-search activity with a discussion of the word 'legacy'. Talk about how linguistic clues are important in showing how different cultures have contributed to the history of Britain. As an extension activity pupils could comb an English dictionary for other words of Scandinavian origin. You will need to explain how Scandinavian derivations are described, for example as Old Norse, Danish or Scandinavian, and the differences between them.

Activity sheet 2

The gods live on

This activity looks at Viking religion and identifies another Viking linguistic legacy: the names of the days of the week from Tuesday to Friday. Before starting the activity explain that the Vikings followed their own pagan religion until they became Christian. Ask pupils to read through the text and underline all the places mentioned and all the references to pagan gods. Pupils should then use this information to work out which gods give us the names of the week for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Depending on the age of the children, you could discuss the move to Christianity in more detail. Explain that both religions would have co-existed for some time, and discuss some of the similarities between the two, for example, the notion of an afterlife and a 'Hell'.

Activity sheet 3

Going berserk!

This activity shows where the expression 'go berserk' came from. Pupils are given three sources on the berserkers and asked to describe them in a few sentences. They are then asked to speculate about why they behaved so recklessly; some have suggested that they may have taken drugs. Check the pupils' understanding of the language used in the text; for example, what is meant by 'immune to the pain of wounds'?



Activity sheet 4

Chess and the Vikings

Chess was almost certainly imported from Asia via the eastern trade routes; however, the Vikings adapted it to reflect their own society. The twelfth-century pieces illustrated here were made of walrus tusks and were found on the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides. Pupils should ideally work in groups for this activity. They will need to draw on what they have learnt about Viking warriors, churchmen and kings. To complete the second half of the activity you will need to explain the feudal system, perhaps using a diagram. Pupils should then examine a modern chess set and decide which level of society each figure represents.

Activity sheet 5

Signs of the times

This activity looks at present-day uses of Viking names and symbols. Ask the pupils to consider why Viking names or images have been used. What does a Viking name or symbol suggest about a company or product? As an extension activity ask the pupils to find other examples. They could look for local companies or sports teams in the telephone directory, or look on the Internet.

Activity sheet 6

The Viking achievement

This last activity asks why we are so fascinated by the Vikings' exploits. Discuss why it is so remarkable that they reached North America 500 years before Columbus. Why did they settle in such inhospitable places? How did they travel over such a wide area? The two sources may also be used to discuss how reconstructions can help us to learn about the past. Discuss how Magnus Andersen's voyage may have changed people's ideas about the Vikings.

The language we speak

Activity sheet 1

The English language we speak in Britain today comes from many other languages, some very old, including Norse and Danish.



Can you find the words listed below in the word-search? Which word is missing?

- take
- call
- window
- husband
- sky
- anger
- low
- market
- scant
- loose
- ugly
- wrong
- happy
- outlaw
- thrive
- ill
- die
- bread
- eggs
- pudding
- cake
- wreck
- gate
- other
- snare
- wing
- skill
- hit
- fell
- leg
- root
- ransack
- crooked
- ragged
- fellow

C	F	L	D	N	A	B	S	U	H	S
R	H	E	K	A	T	C	B	Z	M	N
O	A	G	L	I	A	D	R	Q	P	A
O	P	W	H	L	L	I	E	E	U	R
K	P	I	L	U	O	E	A	C	G	E
E	Y	N	P	M	P	W	D	A	L	F
D	B	D	T	Z	R	I	S	K	Y	G
N	T	O	H	L	A	N	G	E	R	N
Q	E	W	R	O	N	G	A	T	E	I
O	K	E	I	O	S	I	N	T	A	D
T	R	G	V	S	A	A	J	O	F	D
H	A	G	E	E	C	R	K	O	Y	U
E	M	S	P	S	K	C	E	R	W	P
R	A	G	G	E	D	L	L	I	K	S



Read the text below:

- Underline in red the places mentioned.
- Underline in blue the gods and goddesses mentioned.

The Vikings worshipped many gods. They believed that the gods lived in a heavenly city called Asgard. This was reached over a shimmering rainbow bridge called Bifrost.

When ordinary people died they went to a sad, dull place called Hel. However, warriors who died in battle were carried by the Valkyries (battle maidens) to the warriors' heaven, Valhalla. Here they enjoyed great feasts and fights. Their wounds healed every night.

The Viking gods had many powers. Odin (or Woden), the chief god, was wise. Thor, the god of battle, had a magic war hammer, Mjollnir, which always returned to his hand. Freyja was the goddess of fertility. Frigg was the goddess of love and marriage.

The Vikings believed that when the end of the world came there would be a great battle. Loki would lead all the enemies of the gods. The gods would be defeated by their enemies and the world destroyed by fire. They called this time 'The Twilight of the Gods'.

Adapted from Chris Jordan and Tim Wood, *The Vikings*



The word 'Tuesday' comes from the Viking god Tyr. Can you work out which Viking gods give us the names of other days of the week?

Tuesday Tyr

Thursday

Wednesday

Friday



What other Viking religious ideas have survived to the present day? (Look at the places you have marked.)



In the nineteenth-century the German composer Wagner wrote an opera. Can you find out what it was called and what it was about?

Name: _____

Going berserk!

Activity sheet 3

This chess piece shows a berserker biting his shield.



Read through the text below about berserkers.

They were men helped by Odin in battle. They refused to wear byrnies and fought like wolves or mad dogs. They had the strength of bears or bulls. They began a battle by biting the rim of their shield, then they cut down the enemy. Neither fire nor iron could stop them. This was called the berserkgang (berserk rage).

Ynglinga Saga

Angrim had twelve sons. They were all berserkers and no one could equal them. If the fighting fury came to them when they were with friends they would have to go ashore and wrestle with large boulders or trees. Kings gave them what they asked for rather than risk their fury.

Hervarar Saga

The most feared Viking warriors were the berserkers, devotees of the war god Odin. Their name probably came from the bearskin shirts they wore. Berserkers worked themselves into a trance-like frenzy before battle which is said to have left them immune to the pain of wounds.

John Haywood, *Penguin Historical Atlas of the Vikings*



What kind of people were the berserkers? Describe them in a few sentences.



Suggest reasons why they might have behaved in this way.

The Vikings liked board games. They came across chess while working as mercenary fighters for the Byzantine Empire.



Twelfth-century walrus ivory chess pieces found on the Isle of Lewis, Outer Hebrides.



Who do you think these Viking figures represent?



Find out about the feudal system. What was it? How did it work?



Look at a modern chess set.
Draw the different figures.



How many are there of each figure?



Who do you think these figures represent?

Name: _____

Signs of the times

Activity sheet 5

We often name things after the Vikings or use Viking symbols in advertisements.
Here are a few examples.



Viking  *aboard*

VIKING
INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS LIMITED

**VIKING
REMOVALS**



viking motel



What does a Viking name or symbol suggest?



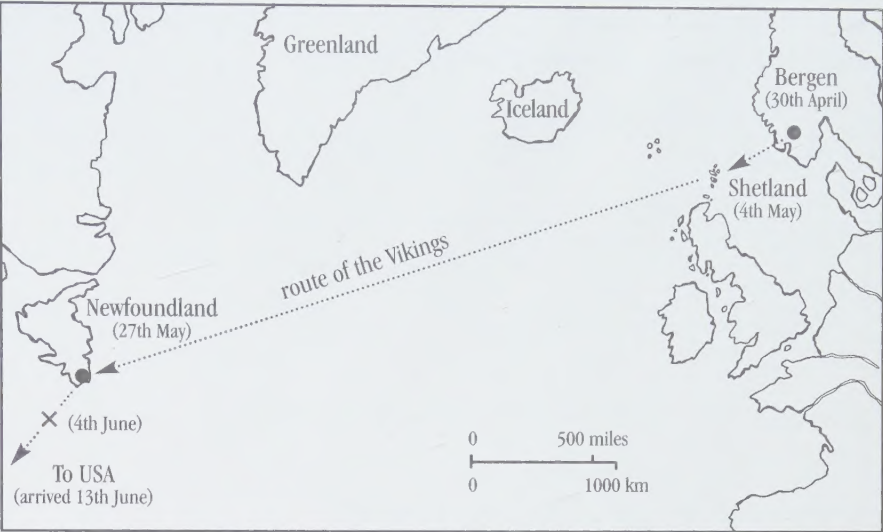
Can you find any other examples of Viking-inspired adverts or symbols? Try looking in the telephone directory for local companies or sports teams.

The Viking achievement

Activity sheet 6

In 1893 Magnus Andersen made a voyage in a copy of a Viking ship. Here is a map showing his voyage and an extract from his diary.

The best progress of the whole voyage was made from 15–16 May when Viking sailed 223 nautical miles. The ship glided like a seagull and her speed sometimes reached eleven knots. For the last few days, Viking had a south-south-westerly breeze and entered into busy shipping lanes. To our amazement, she kept up with most of the other ships.



Heritage Projects Limited

Here is another reconstruction of a Viking ship:

Why do you think people are so fascinated by the Vikings' exploits?

What is the most interesting thing you have learnt about the Vikings?

Name: _____

Activity record sheet

		Activities completed	Extension completed	Comments
Section 1: How do we know about the Vikings?				
1	The Vikings on themselves			
2	Who was Knut?			
3	What do others say?			
4	What do we know about King Knut?			
5	Messages from the grave			
6	Signposts and footprints to the past			
Section 2: Why did the Vikings settle in certain places?				
1	Why did the Vikings become good sailors?			
2	How did the Vikings know about other places to go?			
3	Map of the Viking world			
4	How did the Vikings decide whether to stay or go?			
5	Why did Vikings leave their homelands?			
6	Where did the Vikings raid, trade and settle?			
Section 3: What was Viking society like?				
1	What jobs did the Vikings do?			
2	How were decisions made?			
3	What were the roles of men and women?			
4	What were the Vikings like?			
5	What did the Vikings farm and eat?			
6	How did the Vikings spend their time?			
Section 4: How and where did the Vikings travel?				
1	What were Viking ships like?			
2	Where did the Vikings travel to?			
3	What provisions did the Vikings need for their voyages?			
4	How did the Vikings navigate?			
5	How did the Vikings move their ships?			
6	When did the Vikings reach different places?			
Section 5: What legacy have the Vikings left us?				
1	The language we speak			
2	The gods live on			
3	Going berserk!			
4	Chess and the Vikings			
5	Signs of the times			
6	The Viking achievement			



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Channel 4 Schools, PO Box 100, Warwick CV34 6TZ.

Telephone 01926 436444 Fax 01926 436446

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CASTLE HOUSE
75-76 WELLS STREET
LONDON W1P 3RE

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